

Cacche it anon, lest aventure slake.
What sholde I lenger proces of it make?
Yif me your hond, for in this world is noon,
If that you list, a wight so wel begoon.

And sith I speke of good entencion,
As I to yow have told wel herebiforn,
And love as wel your honour and renoun
As creature in al this world yborn;
By alle the othes that I have yow sworn,
And ye be wrooth therfore, or wene I lye,
Ne shal I never seen yow eft with ye.

Beth nought agast, ne quaketh nat; wherto?
Ne chaungeth nat for fere so your hewe;
for hardely, the werste of this is do;
And though my tale as now be to yow newe,
Yet trist alwey, ye shal me finde trewe;
And were it thing that me thoughte unsittinge,
To yow nolde I no swiche tales bringe.

Now, my good eem, for Goddes love, I preye,
Quod she, com of, and tel me what it is;
for bothe I am agast what ye wol seye,
And eek me longeth it to wite, ywis.
for whether it be wel or be amis,
Sei on, lat me not in this fere dwelle:
So wol I doon, now herkneþ, I shal telle:

Now, nece myn, the kinges dere sone,
The goode, wyse, worthy, fresshe, and free,
Which alwey for to do wel is his wone,
The noble Troilus, so loveth thee,
That, bot ye helpe, it wol his bane be.
Lo, here is al, what sholde I more seye?
Doth what yow list, to make him live or deye.

But if ye lete him deye, I wol sterve;
Have her my trouthe, nece, I nil not lyen;
Al sholde I with this knyf my throte kerve:
With that the teres braste out of his yen,
And seyde: If that ye doon us bothe dyen,
Thus gilteles, than have ye fished faire;
What mende ye, though that we bothe apeyre?

Allas! he which that is my lord so dere,
That trewe man, that noble gentil knight,
That nought desireth but your freendly chere,
I see him deye, ther he goth upright,
And hasteth him, with al his fulle might,
for to be slayn, if fortune wol assente;
Allas! that God yow swich a beautee sente!

If it be so that ye so cruel be,
That of his deeth yow liste nought to recche,
That is so trewe and worthy, as ye see,
No more than of a japere or a wrecche,
If ye be swich, your beautee may not strecche
To make amendes of so cruel a dede;
Avysement is good bfore the nede.

Wo worth the faire gemme vertulees!
Wo worth that herbe also that dooth no bote!
Wo worth that beautee that is routhlees!

Wo worth that wight that tret ech under fote!
And ye, that been of beautee crop and rote,
If therwithal in you ther be no routh,
Than is it harm ye liven, by my trouthe!

And also think wel, that this is no gaudie;
for me were lever, thou and I and he
Were hanged, than I sholde been his baudie,
As heyghe, as men mighte on us alle ysee:
I am thyn eem, the shame were to me,
As wel as thee, if that I sholde assente,
Thorugh myn abet, that he thyn honour shente.

Now understond, for I yow nought requere
To binde yow to him thorugh no behest,
But only that ye make him bettre chere
Than ye han doon er this, and more feste,
So that his lyf be saved, at the leste:
This al and som, and playnly our entente;
God helpe me so, I never other mente.

Lo, this request is not but skile, ywis,
Ne doute of reson, pardee, is ther noon.
I sette the worste that ye dredde this,
Men wolden wondren seen him come or goon.
And ther ayeins answer I thus anon,
That every wight, but he be fool of kinde,
Wol deme it love of frendship in his minde.

What? who wol deme, though he see a man
To temple go, that he the images eteth?
Thenk eek how wel and wysly that he can
Governe himself, that he nothing foryeteth,
That, wher he cometh, he prys and thank him
geteth;
And eek therto, he shal come here so selde,
What fors were it though al the toun behelde?

Swich love of freendes regneth al this toun;
And wrye yow in that mantel evermo;
And, God so wis be my savacioun,
As I have seyde, your beste is to do so.
But alwey, goode nece, to stinte his wo,
So lat your daunger sucred ben a lyte,
That of his deeth ye be nought for to wyte.

Criseyde, which that herde him in this wyse,
Thoughte: I shal fele what he meneth, ywis.
Now, eem, quod she, what wolde ye devyse,
What is your reed I sholde doon of this?
That is wel seyde, quod he, certayn, best is
That ye him love ayein for his lovinge,
As love for love is skilful guerdoninge.

Thenk eek, how elde wasteth every houre
In eche of yow a party of beautee;
And therfore, er that age thee devoure,
Go love, for, olde, ther wol no wight of thee.
Lat this proverbe a lore unto yow be;
To late ywar, quod Beautee, when it paste;
And elde daunteth daunger at the laste.

The kinges fool is woned to cryen loude,
Whan that him thinketh a womman bereth hir hye,

So longe mote ye live, and alle proude,
Til crowes feet be growe under your ye,
And sende yow thanne a mirour in to pryde
In which ye may see your face amorwe!
Neece, I bidde wisshe yow no more sorwe.

With this he stente, and caste adoun the heed,
And she bigan to breste awepe anon.
And seyde: Allas, for wol why nere I deed?
for of this world the feith is alagoon!
Allas! what sholden straunge to me doon,
When he, that for my beste freend I wende,
Ret me to love, and sholde it me defende?

Allas! I wolde han trusted, doutelees,
That if that I, thurgh my disaventure,
Had loved other him or Achilles,
Ector, or any mannes creature,
Ye nolde han had no mercy ne mesure
On me, but alwey had me in repreve;
This false world, alas! who may it leve?

What? is this al the joye and al the feste?
Is this your reed, is this my blisful cas?
Is this the verray mede of your behest?
Is al this peynted proces seyde, alas!
Right for this fyn? O lady myn, Pallas!
Thou in this dredful cas for me purveye;
for so astonied am I, that I deye!

With that she gan ful sorwfully to syke;
I may it be no bet? quod Pandarus;
By God, I shal no more com here this wyke,
And God toforn, that am mistrusted thus;
I see ful wel that ye sette lyte of us,
Or of our deeth! Allas! I wol wrecche!
Mighte he yet live, of me is nought to recche.

O cruel God, O dispitouse Marte,
O furies three of helle, on yow I crye!
So lat me never out of this hous departe,
If that I mente harm or vilanye!
But sith I see my lord mot nedes dye,
And I with him, here I me shryve, and seye
That wikkedly ye doon us bothe deye.

But sith it lyketh yow that I be deed,
By Neptunus, that god is of the see,
for this forth shal I never eten breed
Til I myn owene herte blood may see;
for certayn, I wole deye as sone as he.
And up he sterte, and on his wey he raughte,
Til she agayn him by the lappe caughte.

Criseyde, which that wel neigh starf for fere,
So as she was the ferfullest wight
That mighte be, and herde eek with hir ere,
And saw the sorwful ernest of the knight,
And in his preyere eek saw noon unright,
And for the harm that mighte eek fallen more,
She gan to rewe, and dradde hir wonder sore;

And thoughte thus: Unhappes fallen thikke
Al day for love, and in swich maner cas,

As men ben cruel in hemself and wikke;
And if this man slee here himself, alas!
In my presence, it wol be no solas.
What men wolde of hit deme I can nat seye;
It nedeth me ful sleily for to pleye.

And with a sorwful syk she seyde thrye:
Al! Lord! what me is tid a sory chaunce!
for myn estat now lyth in jupartye,
And eek myn emes lyf lyth in balaunce;
But nathelees, with Goddes governaunce,
I shal so doon, myn honour shal I kepe,
And eek his lyf, and stinte for to wepe.

Of harmes two, the lesse is for to chese;
Yet have I lever maken him good chere
In honour, than myn emes lyf to lese;
Ye seyn, ye nothing elles me requere?
No, wis, quod he, myn owene nece dere.
Now wel, quod she, and I wol doon my peyne;
I shal myn herte ayeins my lust constreyne,

But that I nil not holden him in honde,
Ne love a man, ne can I not, ne may
Ayeins my wil; but elles wol I fonde,
Myn honour sauf, plesse him fro day to day;
Therto nolde I nought ones have seyde nay,
But that I dredde, as in my fantasye;
But cesse cause, ay cesseth maladye.

And here I make a protestacioun,
That in this proces if ye depper go,
That certaynly, for no savacioun
Of yow, though that ye sterve bothe two,
Though al the world on o day be my fo,
Ne shal I never on him han other routh.
I graunte wel, quod Pandarus, by my trouthe.

But may I truste wel therto, quod he,
That, of this thing that ye han hight me here,
Ye wol it holden trewly unto me?
Ye, doutelees, quod she, myn uncle dere.
Ne that I shal han cause in this matere,
Quod he, to pleyne, or after yow to preche?
Why, no, pardee; what nedeth more speche?

Tho fillen they in othere tales glade,
Til at the laste: O good eem, quod she tho,
for love of God, which that us bothe made,
Tel me how first ye wisten of his wo:
Wot noon of hit but ye? He seyde, No.
Can he wel speke of love? quod she, I preye,
Tel me, for I the bet me shal purveye.

Tho Pandarus a litel gan to smyle,
And seyde: By my trouthe, I shal yow telle.
This other day, nought gon ful longe whyle,
Inwith the paleys gardyn, by a welle,
Gan he and I wel half a day to dwelle,
Right for to speken of an ordonaunce,
How we the Grekes mighte disavaunce.

Sone after that bigonne we to lepe,
And casten with our dartes to and fro,